

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Cancelled).

2. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the operative element comprises a tissue ablation element.

3. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the operative element comprises a tissue sensing element.

4. (Currently Amended) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member, wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body and one or more of a tissue ablation element and a tissue sensing element; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

5-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

10. (Currently Amended) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud comprising a wall and ~~one or more~~ a plurality of vacuum ports located on the wall for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

11. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

12. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

13. (Previously Presented) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue, wherein the shroud is pre-shaped to expand in the absence of a compressive force.

14-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud has a first configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is inflated, and a second configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is deflated.

18-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the operating comprises delivering ablation energy to the operative element to ablate the target tissue site.

28. (Cancelled).

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the target tissue is cardiac tissue.

30. (Currently Amended) A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target epicardial tissue site;

applying a vacuum force to the shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

~~operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on~~ sensing a signal at the target tissue site with the operative element while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a conically-shaped stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue, wherein the shroud is not secured to an exterior of the operative element.

35. (Previously Presented) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue, wherein the shroud is configured to assume a collapsed configuration in the presence of an external compressive force.

36. (Cancelled).

37. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the ~~one or more~~ plurality of vacuum ports are located on a distal edge of the wall.

38. (Cancelled).

39. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud further has one or more lumens extending along the wall in fluid communication with the ~~one or more~~ plurality of vacuum ports.

40. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 39, wherein the wall has ~~one or more~~ a plurality of enlarged planar regions carrying the ~~one or more~~ plurality of lumens and one or more thinner planar regions between the ~~one or more~~ enlarged planar regions.

41. (Cancelled).

42. (Previously Presented) A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target tissue site;

applying a vacuum force to the shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site;

expanding the operative element; and

operating the expanded operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

43-44. (Cancelled).

45. (Previously Presented) A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target tissue site;

expanding the shroud;

applying a vacuum force to the expanded shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises releasing an external compressive force from the shroud.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises expanding the operative element.

48. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

49. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

50. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

51. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

52. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

53. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

54. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

55. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

56. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

57. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

58. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

59. (Previously Presented) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the tissue target site is a cardiac tissue target site.

63. (Cancelled).

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the tissue target site is a cardiac tissue target site.

66. (New) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member, wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue, wherein the shroud has a first configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is inflated, and a second configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is deflated.

67. (New) The medical probe of claim 66, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

68. (New) The medical probe of claim 66, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

69. (New) The medical probe of claim 66, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

70. (New) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud comprising a wall, one or more vacuum ports located on the wall for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue, and one or more lumens extending along the wall in fluid communication with the one or more vacuum ports, wherein the wall has one or more enlarged planar regions carrying the one or more lumens and one or more thinner planar regions between the one or more enlarged planar regions.

71. (New) The medical probe of claim 70, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

72. (New) The medical probe of claim 70, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

73. (New) The medical probe of claim 70, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.